CBC Newsletter

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 48 December 2002/January 2003 Number 6

In Search of Sparrows

We are very fortunate to be welcoming Dr. Jim Rising of the University of Toronto as speaker at the Winter Carolina Bird Club meeting in Washington, NC. Dr. Rising authored the standard guide to North American sparrows - *A Guide to the Identification and Natural History of The Sparrows of the United States and Canada*. He will be speaking to us about the sparrows typically found in our part of the country. He has promised to go on a birding trip or two as well, so those hoping to work more on the often nasty ID problems faced when looking at sparrows are in for a real treat.

We expect our second speaker to speak on the subject of planting for birds in the Carolinas, but we are still waiting on a final answer at this point.

The meeting will be held at the Washington, NC, Civic Center. This is a lovely converted railroad station located in the heart of the historic downtown. Parking is available immediately adjacent to the building.

We have a block of rooms reserved at the Comfort Inn at $55/night. This rate is good for the nights of the 16th, 17th, and 18th - you need to tell them you are with the CBC when you book the room. The block is only reserved until the 16th of December, but they will honor the rate for rooms booked after that date if any are available. Unfortunately, none of the hotels in Washington are located in the downtown area, but none require more than a ten minute drive to reach the civic center.

The number for the Comfort Inn is (252) 946-4444. Other lodging options include: Days Inn (252) 946-6141; Econo-lodge (252) 946-7781; Hampton Inn (252) 940-4556; Holiday Inn Express (252) 946-5500.

Field Trip Schedule

	Trip #
Friday (AM):	1, 7
Friday (PM):	7, 9, 10
Friday (Full-day):	2, 3, 5
Saturday (AM):	7, 8, 11
Saturday (PM):	9, 10
Saturday (Full-day):	3, 4, 5, 6

Field Trip Descriptions

Trip 1 (*Half-day*): Aurora-Bayview Ferry, VOA Site A: We will take the free ferry across the Pamlico river to look for diving ducks and then look for sparrows and possibly Short-eared Owl at the VOA site in Beaufort county.

Trip 2 (*Full-day*): Mattamuskeet NWR impoundments, Lake Phelps: We will visit impoundments at the eastern end of Lake Mattamuskeet and the causeway across the lake. The flocks of wintering swans, geese, and ducks can be incredible. The fields around Lake Phelps can produce rare sparrows, Longspurs, and possibly Short-eared Owl.

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For Hummingbird Enthusiasts

It is that exciting time of year once again–winter hummingbird season! With the temperatures cooling, the reports will really begin to roll in over the next few weeks. So, before it gets too busy, I want to give you an update of my activities and hummingbird happenings across the state.

Last Winter

The winter of 2001-2002 was fantastic for hummingbird activity in our state. In summary, last year across North Carolina I managed to band 12 Rufous, one Black-chinned, and 16 Ruby-throateds. I banded my first Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds (both juvenile males) last season as well. The Calliope was at a feeder in Winston-Salem (Forsyth Co.) all winter. The Broad-tailed, our first state record for the species, spent from late October through mid-April in Gibsonville (Guilford Co.). We also had the first state record Broad-billed Hummingbird, another immature male, but unfortunately, it did not stay long enough for me to catch it.

I encountered a good number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds last winter. One particularly interesting individual was an inland immature male Ruby-throat that I banded in Hillsborough (Orange Co.), a very rare find during the cooler months.

On somewhat a different note, I managed to confirm a northern extension of the wintering range of Ruby-throateds along the Outer Banks, well up into northern Dare County. I caught several in Manteo, saw multiple birds in Kill Devil Hills and banded two at feeders in Kitty Hawk.

Further south, multiple Ruby-throateds were again reported in the Morehead City area and around Wilmington. I managed to get to a greater proportion of these hummers this year but still a good number went unbanded as time ran out in February. I hope to be able to spend more time along our coast this winter in order to catch and study a greater number of these birds. This is a very unique situation and we know so very little about this species during the non-breeding season. I really look forward to taking greater advantage of the opportunities to band and observe Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at this time of year.

Recaptures

Recaptures of banded birds are as exciting to a bird bander as capturing new or rare species of birds. I was reunited with three familiar Rufous over the winter, two in Hampstead (Pender Co.; one male and one female) and one in Vass (Moore Co.). The Hampstead birds I had banded as juveniles the year before. The Rufous in Vass, however, had been banded as an a adult two years before, making him at least three years old last winter.

Catching a bird banded elsewhere by a different bander is even more exciting. Last January I had not one but two such events! I found a banded adult female Rufous Hummingbird at a feeder in Pinehurst that had been banded three years previously in Louisiana by a colleague in a well-known winter hummer haven near Lake Pontchartrain. And shortly after that I recaptured an adult female Black-chinned Hummingbird in Wilmington that had been banded by Gary Phillips, my subpermittee, in Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina about ten weeks earlier!!

Fall Highlights

Selasphorus (Rufous-type) hummingbirds have already been spotted at a number of feeders in the last couple months. However most of these birds have been only passers by; migrating to points unknown. I did manage to catch a handsome adult male Rufous in Hendersonville (Henderson Co.). More recently I was able to catch two female Rufous Hummingbirds that continue to be seen: one in Lewisville (Forsyth Co.) and one in Pinehurst (Moore Co.). Also we have what I expect to be three Rufous back at feeders they have used for multiple winters:

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Larry and the Wallcreeper

All serious birders have their "bugaboo" birds – birds that elude them despite every effort to find them. No matter how many times they go to the appropriate countries or correct habitats, they just can't seem to find that darn bird! Larry's "bugaboo" bird was the Wallcreeper, a fancy relative of the treecreepers and nuthatches, found only in high elevations across Eurasia from France to China. He had been on birding trips to the Pyrenees in France and Spain, to the kingdom of Bhutan high in the Himalayas, and the Alps in Switzerland, trying to get a glimpse of the bird. Many of these trips were without me, so I kept telling him that he would not see this bird without me also being there to enjoy it.

This past September, Larry and I went with my Ventures group on another visit to the French Pyrenees. After watching rock walls for hours and staking out sheer rock faces in several locations, we had not managed to find the elusive Wallcreeper. We spent our final day of the trip near the Spanish border in the Valle d'Ossoue, a spectacular area of granite cliffs, boulder-strewn fields and sweeping vistas. We climbed over rocks and along cliff trails for several hours finding no sign of the bird of our quest, then decided to head back down into the valley to check out another area of scree and boulders. Larry was in the lead van, some distance in front of me driving the second vehicle, when Milege Hahn, one of my passengers, requested a waterfall photo stop. As she was carefully setting the picture, a bird with a slow, floating flight approached the van. "Wallcreeper!" I shouted, and we tumbled out of the van like dice from a cup. The bird

flew over our heads and landed on a pile of rocks about 30 feet away, allowing us to get great looks at this enigmatic species. Then off it flew again, its black, white and red wings contrasting with the gray rocks, across the stream and towards a distant gorge and waterfall.

Meanwhile we were all yelling and gesturing to the folks in the first van to run as fast as they could, but alas, when they arrived the bird was nowhere to be seen. Larry was absolutely beside himself and was predicting yet another miss. However, I was determined not let my friend be denied the bird of his dreams. Coaxing and cajoling, I persuaded Larry to at least cross the stream and head for the waterfall to see if the bird would possibly still be there.

Persistence paid off. When we finally got to the waterfall, after fording three streams, there was not one but <u>two</u> Wallcreepers! For the next 10 minutes we watched the pair climbing the rock face above our heads, floating right above us in tandem, and showing off their crimson wings. At one stage they approached to within a few meters of us, almost oblivious of our presence, as they fed in the rocks. This was an unbelievable show. We were both ecstatic! Larry not only got his Wallcreeper, but got views that many of us could only dream of. He came home from France a very happy birder, and spent the next few days telling and retelling this story to anyone that would listen.

Unfortunately, three days after returning home, on September 23, Larry Farer suffered a brain aneurysm and died on October 11 after being in a coma for 2 weeks. Who could have ever imagined that the Wallcreeper would be his final lifer, a bird he had so had so wanted to see for the past five years. Larry was a very special friend, a good birder and we will miss him a lot.

Donations in Larry's memory may be made to Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society, PO Box 18711, Asheville, NC 28814 and designated for the Beaver Lake Sanctuary.

Simon Thompson
Jo Ann Martin

Christmas Bird Counts in the Carolinas

as of November 5th. Check the web site for updates - www.carolinabirdclub.org

Christmas Bird Count	Date	Contact	Phone	E-mail
ACE Basin, SC	12/29/02	David Chamberlain		
Bodie-Pea Island, NC	12/29/02	Paul Sykes	706-769-9436	paul_sykes@usgs.gov
Brevard, NC	12/14/02	Norma Siebenheller	828-884-5443	sieb@citcom.net
Buncombe County, NC	12/21/02	Marilyn Westphal	828-891-9896	mjwestphal@unca.edu
Cape Hatteras, NC	12/30/02	Pat Moore		Topatneal@aol.com
Central Beaufort, NC	12/15/02	Jim Albera	252-946-2192	
Chapel Hill, NC	12/22/02	Will Cook	919-967-5446	cwcook@duke.edu
Charleston, SC	01/05/03	Bob Chin		rchinn@awod.com
Charlotte, NC	12/28/02	Wayne Covington	704-362-1774	jacoving@bellsouth.net
Clemens, SC	12/14/02	Drew Lanham	864-656-7294	jlanham@bellsouth.net
Congaree Swamp N. M., SC	12/15/02	Robin Carter	803-782-8820	rcarter@sc.rr.com
Durham, NC	12/15/02	Mike Schultz	919-490-6761	mschultz@duke.edu
Falls Lake, NC	12/28/02	Brian Bockhahn	919-676-1027	birdranger@excite.com
Gaston County, NC	12/22/02	Duane Crane	704-866-7527	Crane.Duane@gaston.cc.nc.us
Grayson Highlands, VA	01/04/03	Allen Boynton	540-677-1204	Allenboynton@adelphia.net
Guilford County, NC	12/14/02	Elizabeth Link	336-273-4672	baddoggi@yahoo.com.
Henderson County, NC	12/29/02	Wayne K. Forsythe	828-697-8828	wforsythe@a-o.com
Highlands Plateau	12/16/02	Edwin Poole	828-526-2775	kaywick@principia.edu
Jordan Lake, NC	12/29/02	Carol Williamson	919-383-2364	Carolw@sandler-recht.com
Kitty Hawk, NC	12/14/02	Jeff Lewis	252-473-1086	egardens@inteliport.com
Lake Wateree	01/04/03	Donna Slyce Bailey	803-996-0960	dsbailey@conterra.com
Litchfield/Pawleys Island, SC	12/30/02	Jack Peachey	843-347-5810	ppaw@sccoast.net
McClellanville, SC	12/14/02	Perry E. Nugent	843-556-3841	nugentpc@earthlink.net
Morehead City, NC	12/15/02	John Fussell,	252-240-1046	jfuss@bmd.clis.com
Mt. Jefferson, NC	12/14/02	Vaughn Morrison	336-877-8795	elmvwm@skybest.com
New Bern, NC	12/16/02	Bob Holmes	252-633-3003	
New River, NC	12/21/02	James Coman	336-359-2909	hillshepherd@skybest.com
Pee Dee NWR, NC	01/04/03	Laura Fogo	704-694-4424	Laura_Fogo@fws.gov
Portsmouth Island, NC	12/30/02	Peter Vankevich	202 547-4523	
Raleigh, NC	12/14/02	John Connors	919-755-0253	John.connors@ncmail.net
Raven Rock State Park, NC	12/14/02	Paul Hart	910-893-4888	Paul.hart@ncmail.net
Santee NWR, SC	12/28/02	Lex Glover	803-438-9855	bglvr@clemson.edu
South Lake Norman, NC	12/15/02	Taylor Piephoff	704-532-6336	PiephoffT@aol.com
Southern Pines, NC	12/15/02	Susan M. Campbell	910-949-3207	NCaves@utinet.net
Southport, NC	01/05/02	Ricky Davis	252-443-0276	RJDNC@aol.com
Spartanburg, SC	12/30/02	Lyle Campbell	864-503-5751	lcampbell@gw.uscs.edu
Stone Mountain, NC	12/28/02	John Mac Connell	336-384-1162	jgmac@skybest.com
Wilmington, NC	01/04/03	Sam Cooper	910-392-9253	samwilm@aol.com
York/Rock Hill, SC	12/21/02	Bill Hilton, Jr.	803-684-5852	research@hiltonpond.org

CBCs by Date

12/14/02
- Brevard, NC
- Clemens, SC
- Guilford County, NC
- Kitty Hawk, NC
- McClellanville, SC
- Mt. Jefferson, NC
- Raleigh, NC
- Raven Rock State Park, NC

12/15/02
- Central Beaufort, NC
- Congaree Swamp N. M., SC
- Durham, NC
- Morehead City, NC
- South Lake Norman, NC
- Southern Pines, NC

12/16/02
- Highlands Plateau
- New Bern, NC

12/21/02
- Buncombe County, NC
- New River, NC
- York/Rock Hill, SC

12/22/02
- Chapel Hill, NC
- Gaston County, NC

12/28/02
- Charlotte, NC
- Falls Lake, NC
- Santee NWR, SC
- Stone Mountain, NC

12/29/02
- ACE Basin, SC
- Bodie-Pea Island, NC
- Henderson County, NC
- Jordan Lake, NC

12/30/02
- Cape Hatteras, NC
- Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC
- Portsmouth Island, NC
- Spartanburg, SC

01/04/03
- Grayson Highlands, VA
- Lake Wateree
- Pee Dee NWR, NC
- Wilmington, NC

01/05/03
- Southport, NC
- Charleston, SC

Hummer Update

a male in Vass (Moore Co.) and one in Hampstead (Pender Co.) and a female in Shelby (Cleveland Co.). With colder temperatures forecast for this weekend, I suspect I will hear about the presence of more of these hardy hummingbirds very shortly.

Of even greater interest, an immature male Calliope Hummingbird has been seen daily since October 15th in a yard in Castalia (Franklin Co.). He is using the vast array of Salvias planted there. Interestingly, this is the same yard where I banded a Rufous back in 2000. However with frost predicted over the weekend, I am hoping that the hummer will find the feeder so that I may be able to catch him in the near future. It would be the third banded Calliope in two years in North Carolina. So far, several birders have been to see this feisty little beast and he has put on quite a show, 'bugging' in his favorite tree and chasing other feeder birds around the yard. I have a feeling this is just the beginning of another very exciting winter here!

More News

For anyone that has not yet heard, we now have a hummer web page up and running in North Carolina. The North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, with whom I am a research affiliate, has created a great site at www.naturalsciences.org/nchummers/. It contains a variety of information about the species of hummingbirds found thus far in our state and is loaded with specifics (including photos), about my banding activities.

Acknowledgements

I must add that last year I had help from two other winter hummer banders who are relatively new on the scene: Gary Phillips and Rusty Trump. Gary spends most of his time banding hummingbirds along the northern coast of South Carolina near his home in Conway. Rusty travels from Suwanee, Georgia throughout the state in search of winter hummingbirds. Rusty banded a few hummers (two Rufous; one each in Franklin and Bryson City) in the mountains and Gary banded a number of hummers (6 Ruby-throats & 4 Rufous; in both Hampstead/Wilmington and Morehead City/Beaufort) along the coast. Both Rusty and Gary are very talented banders who through their commitment and dedication have proven invaluable in our quest to understand more about wintering hummingbirds in North Carolina.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to The Museum (for public relations work including creation and maintenance of the web site as well as loan of banding equipment) and the Hummer Bird Study Group (Clay, Alabama; for travel funds) for their continued support in my endeavors. I would also like to thank the private contributors who have donated funds to make my work possible over the past four years. Without you

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Field Trip Descriptions [Continued]

Trip 3 (*Full-day*): Lake Mattamuskeet, Lake Phelps: We will visit the Mattamuskeet causeway, the headquarters ponds, and the wildlife drive. Mattamuskeet, in addition to being known for wintering waterfowl, often produces wintering neotropicals such as Orange-crowned Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo. In the afternoon we will visit the fields around Lake Phelps to look for sparrows and possibly Short-eared Owl.

Trip 4 (*Full-day*): Swan Quarter-Ocracoke Ferry: We will take the 9:30 AM ferry from Swan Quarter to Ocracoke. Many diving ducks difficult to see elsewhere in the state, including Redhead, Long-tailed Duck, and scoters are possible on this trip, and the waters around Ocracoke are among the best places in the state to find wintering Brant. We will be parking our cars at the ferry terminal on the mainland and paying $1.00 per head as pedestrians to take the ferry. After eating lunch in Ocracoke (bring lunch, as the few restaurants on the island may not be open in midwinter), we will take the 12:30 PM return ferry back. The crossing takes approximately 2.5 hours. Time and interest permitting, we will stop by the Mattamuskeet causeway.

Trip 5 (*Full-day*): Mattamuskeet NWR, Swan Quarter NWR, Pungo NWR: We will bird the western end of Mattamuskeet via the Rose Bay Canal trail. After lunch, we will visit Swan Quarter to look for diving ducks and Pungo to look for landbirds and geese.

Trip 6 (*Full-day*): Croatan National Forest, Neuse River Ferry: We will look for landbirds in the Croatan NF. This is an excellent spot for Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and other targets include Bachman's Sparrow and possibly Henslow's. We will also look for waterbirds along the Neuse River. In the afternoon, we will take the Cherry Branch ferry across the Neuse to Minnesott Beach.

Trip 7 (*Half-day*): Pettigrew SP, Lake Phelps: We will look for wintering landbirds in Pettigrew SP and waterfowl on Lake Phelps. Past finds have included Common Merganser. The fields around the lake can also produce good wintering sparrows.

Trip 8 (*Half-day*): Aurora-Bayview Ferry, Goose Creek State Park: We will take the 9:10 ferry from Bayview across the Pamlico river to Aurora, looking for diving ducks during the crossing. We will then bird Goose Creek SP, looking for wintering landbirds and rails in the woods and marshes.

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Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting Registration Form

January 17-19, 2003

Name: _____ Day Phone: _____

Address: _____ Evening Phone: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____ E-mail: _____

Enclosed is a check for $_____ for ____ member ($10) registration(s) and/or _____ nonmember ($20) registration(s).

Please include names not listed above: _____

_____

___This my [our] first time attending a CBC meeting.

Field Trip Choices:

Friday: Morning _____ Afternoon _____ All-day _____

Saturday: Morning _____ Afternoon _____ All-day _____

Make checks payable to Carolina Bird Club & send to: CBC, 11 West Jones Street, Raleigh NC 27601-1029

Membership News

A Nominating Committee has been appointed to find candidates for several CBC offices that will be up for election next May. President Van Atkins has appointed Len Pardue of Asheville, NC, as committee chair; and Paula Wright of Greenville, NC, and Steve Patterson, of Pickens, SC, as members.

The committee will draft with a slate of candidates to put before the membership at the May 2003 meeting, in Clemson, SC. The following positions will be up for election:

President, Secretary, Treasurer, SC Vice President, Eastern N.C. Member-at-Large, WNC Member-at-Large and SC Member-at-Large. President Van Atkins and SC Vice President Donna Bailey are ineligible for re-election. Secretary Susan Pulsipher has declined nomination for a third and final one-year term. Kathleen O'Grady has resigned as SC Member-at-Large; the CBC Executive Committee is seeking someone willing to fill out her term and stand for election in May. ENC and WNC members-at-large Sandy Cash and Charlotte Goedsche are eligible for re-election.

The Executive Committee meets at each of the CBC weekends and holds a one-day retreat during summer. The committee is responsible for planning the weekends and for managing club finances, publications and other activities.

Vice Presidents serve three-year terms and are ineligible for re-election. Members-at-large can serve consecutive two-year terms. President is limited to two consecutive one-year terms. Secretary and Treasurer can serve three consecutive one-year terms.

Anyone with suggestions or thoughts about candidates for CBC office should contact Len Pardue (eljeep@mindspring.com; 828-254-7618), John Wright (johnswrighthsd@earthlink.net; 252-756-5139) or Steve Patterson (SCBirder@aol.com; 864-878-8186).

Field Trip Descriptions *[Continued]*

Trip 9 (*Half-day*): Aurora-Bayview Ferry, Chocowinity Bay: We will take the 3:15 ferry from Bayview to Aurora, birding the river during the crossing. We will bird our way back along the south side of the river.

Trip 10 (*Half-day*): Pactolus Catfish Ponds, VOA Site: We will visit the catfish ponds near Pactolus and then look for Short-eared owls at the VOA site at dusk.

Trip 11 (*Half-day*) New Bern Quarry: We will bird the quarry near the Neuse River. This site has produced several rare finds in past years. Ducks, rails, and wintering shorebirds are all usually seen, along with some lingering landbirds.

CBC Board Members

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843-766-7000/729-0271
vatkins@awod.com

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The CBC Newsletter is published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc., the ornithological society of the Carolinas. CBC is a nonprofit corporation headquartered in Raleigh, NC. Founded in 1937 the membership is open to anyone interested in birds, natural history and conservation. Members are encouraged to submit items of interest to the CBC Newsletter editor: Judy Walker, 7639 Farm Gate Dr., Charlotte, NC 28215 birdwalker@mac.com Submission deadlines are the 10th of January, March, May, July, September and November.

Submit membership applications and change of address to:
CBC Headquarters Secretary
11 W. Jones St.,
Raleigh, NC 27601-1029

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Hummer Update

and the graciousness of the many hummingbird hosts and hostesses, this work would not be possible. I am indebted to you all.

Please keep in Touch!

So, keep a feeder up and your eyes peeled. Better yet, tell all your friends about the fantastic phenomenon of winter hummingbirds across our state. And please let me know if you see or hear of any hummingbirds between now and March 15th.

Susan Campbell
(910) 949-3207

Welcome New Members

Andrew & Linda Medlin
Salisbury, NC

Lori & Gene Voth
Asheville, NC

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